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Bus accident.

* 22*S.N.Q.*—SRI A. NESAMONY, SRI T. T. DANIEL, SRI M. WILLIAM, SRI T. S. RAMASWAMY PILLAI AND SRI K. SATTANATHA KARAYALAR : Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the State Transport bus overturned on, 10th March 1958 at Parasalai on its way to Trivandrum;

(*b*) the number of passengers travelling in the bus at the time of accident;

(*c*) the number of passengers injured;

(*d*) the number of passengers dead;

(*e*) the cause of the accident; and

(*f*) what help is rendered to the injured and to the families of the injured and the dead?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : (*a*) Yes, Sir.

(*b*) 89 (including driver and conductor).

(*c*) 86 (including driver and conductor).

(*d*) 2.

(*e*) The driver of the bus (K. 87) overtook another bus (K. 68) going in front at a high speed. While so doing, it was about to run into a ditch on the right side of the road and in order to avoid this, the driver appears to have suddenly turned to his left and lost control. The bus then hit a post on the left side of the road, ran into an open drain, tilted and then crashed into the trunk of a road-side tree and fell on its rear side.

(*f*) First-aid was rendered by the crew of the State Transport vehicle and the injured were taken to hospital. No information is at present available as to the help rendered to the families of the injured and the dead.

SRI A. NESAMONY : May I know the number of vehicles that were plying on that day for the Mandakad festival and whether the Kerala Transport Service was also running its buses by obtaining special permits from our Road Transport Authority?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : I do not have figures about the total number of buses which were run for the festival. But it is true that the Kerala State buses were also running in that route. So far as the Madras State buses are concerned, we got permit for about four buses for this route.

SRI T. T. DANIEL : May I know from the Hon. Minister, what is the capacity of the bus and how many persons were allowed to travel on that day? Also whether the District Collector, the Director of Transport, who was conducting a conference in Nagercoil and other important officials of the State went either to the scene of occurrence or to the hospital to take care of the injured?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : The capacity of the bus is 37 but the passengers who wanted to go to the festival would not hear any protest from the conductor. They all got into the

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bus and they could not be taken out. Actually there were 89 passengers including the driver and the conductor in the bus. Immediate first-aid was given by the transport crew and they were immediately taken to the Neiyatinkara hospital. Five of them were admitted in the Neiyatinkara hospital and 20 of them were admitted in the Trivandrum hospital. Every possible assistnace was rendered immediately. I do not know whether the Collector visited the scene.

SRI T. S. RAMASWAMY PILLAI : May I know whether there was any scheduled driver kept as a stand-by and whether the concerned driver was recruited by the Public Service Commission or by the present Director of Transport?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : I do not have any particulars about the driver but it is obvious from the report that the driver tried to overtake another transport vehicle which was going at a fairly good speed in the same direction and it appears that the accident was, I should say, largely due to (An hon. Member : Rash driving)—I would not say rash driving as the matter is before the court . . .

MR. SPEAKER : If the matter is before the court, then it is *sub judice.*

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Whether it was due to rash driving or not is a matter to be decided by the court.

SRI A. NESAMONY : May I know whether instructions were issued by the Traffic Superintendent that the buses should be overloaded so as to compete with the Kerala Bus Service and also whether there was any officer of the department regulating traffic at the junction where the Mandakad festival was celebrated?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Far from giving instructions that they should be overloaded, instructions were given that they should not be overloaded. But it was impossible for the conductor to prevent people from getting into the bus when they were rushing for the festival.

SRI T. T. DANIEL : May I know from the Hon. Minister whether any of our officers of the Transport department actually took the injured to any of the hospitals and also whether the Government are aware of the fact that those poor injured people, after their discharge from the hospitals, had to beg for money from the people to go to their houses?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : So far as the taking to the hospital is concerned, the State Transport has come a little after this incident and the crew of the State Transport bus took five of them to the Neiyatinkara hospital and the rest to the Trivandrum hospital. So far as the second part of the question is concerned, I have no information.

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SRI T. S. RAMASWAMY PILLAI: May I know whether the Government are aware of the fact that the Kerala Ministers took the trouble to visit the scene of accident whereas the Director of Transport who was at that time in Nagercoil was not kind enough to investigate the matter personally?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: I do not have this information but I presume that everything possible under the circumstances was done to alleviate the suffering of the injured persons.

SRI N. MAHALINGAM: கனம் சபாநாயகர் அவர்களே, சாதாரணமாக முன்பு திருவாங்கூரில் அளவுக்கு அதிகமான பிரயாணிகளை பஸ்களில் ஏற்றிக்கொண்டிருந்தார்கள் என்பது உண்மையா? அதன் காரணமாக சென்னை ராஜ்ய சர்க்கார் அந்த பஸ் நிர்வாகத்தை ஏற்றுக்கொண்ட பிறகும் ஓவர்லோடைத் தடுக்க முடியாமலிருக்கிறதா?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: முக்கியமாக விசேஷ தினங்களில்—விழா நாட்களில் அதிகமான பிரயாணிகள் பஸ்ஸில் ஏறுவதைத் தடுக்க முடியவில்லை அந்தப் பிரதேசத்தில். சொன்னாலும் அங்கே இருக்கிற பிரயாணிகள் கேட்பதில்லை. அது வழக்கமாகப் போய்விட்டது என்று என்னிடத்தில் சொல்கிறார்கள்.

SRI M. JAGANNATHAN: Sir, I understand that the driver in question was a new recruit on daily wage basis and that he has failed in the driver's test conducted by the foreman? How is it that the Government appointed such an inefficient driver?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Sir, if the allegation made by the hon. Member is true, it is very serious and I will take action on that. At present I have no information about the qualifications of the driver.

SRI T. S. RAMASWAMY PILLAI rose—

MR. SPEAKER: I have already allowed twelve supplementary questions on this question. Of these, nine questions were allowed to hon. Members coming from that area. If you will ask only one more question, I have no objection.

SRI T. S. RAMASWAMY PILLAI: Sir, may I know whether the Government are aware of the fact that conductors are being punished for refusing to overload and that one Sri Nagarajan's increment was barred by the transport authority because he refused to overload?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: I shall be grateful to the hon. Member if he would put it in writing and send it to me. No person has any right to do anything against law. I shall certainly take very serious notice if the allegations are proved.

Raw films.

* 23 *S.N.Q.*—SRI A. A. RASHEED: Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries be pleased to state whether there is any proposal to start a factory for the manufacture of raw films at Ootacamund in the Nilgiris district?